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(54) Reciprocating drive mechanism

(57) A reciprocating shower in a paper mill is driven from a rotary drive 12 through a variable velocity ratio universal coupling (Hooke's joint) so as to convert a constant velocity drive into a variable velocity ratio drive of the crank 7.

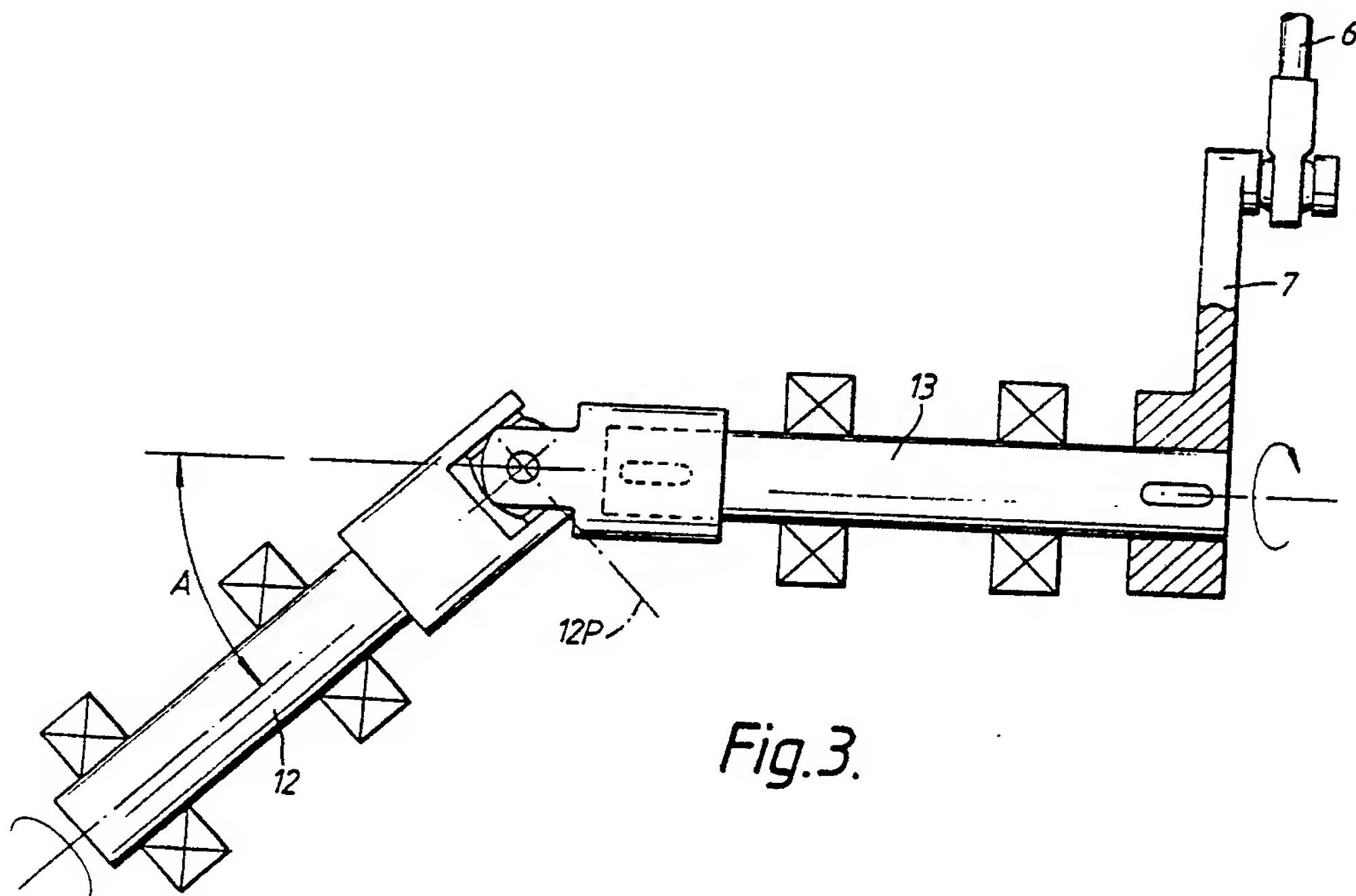
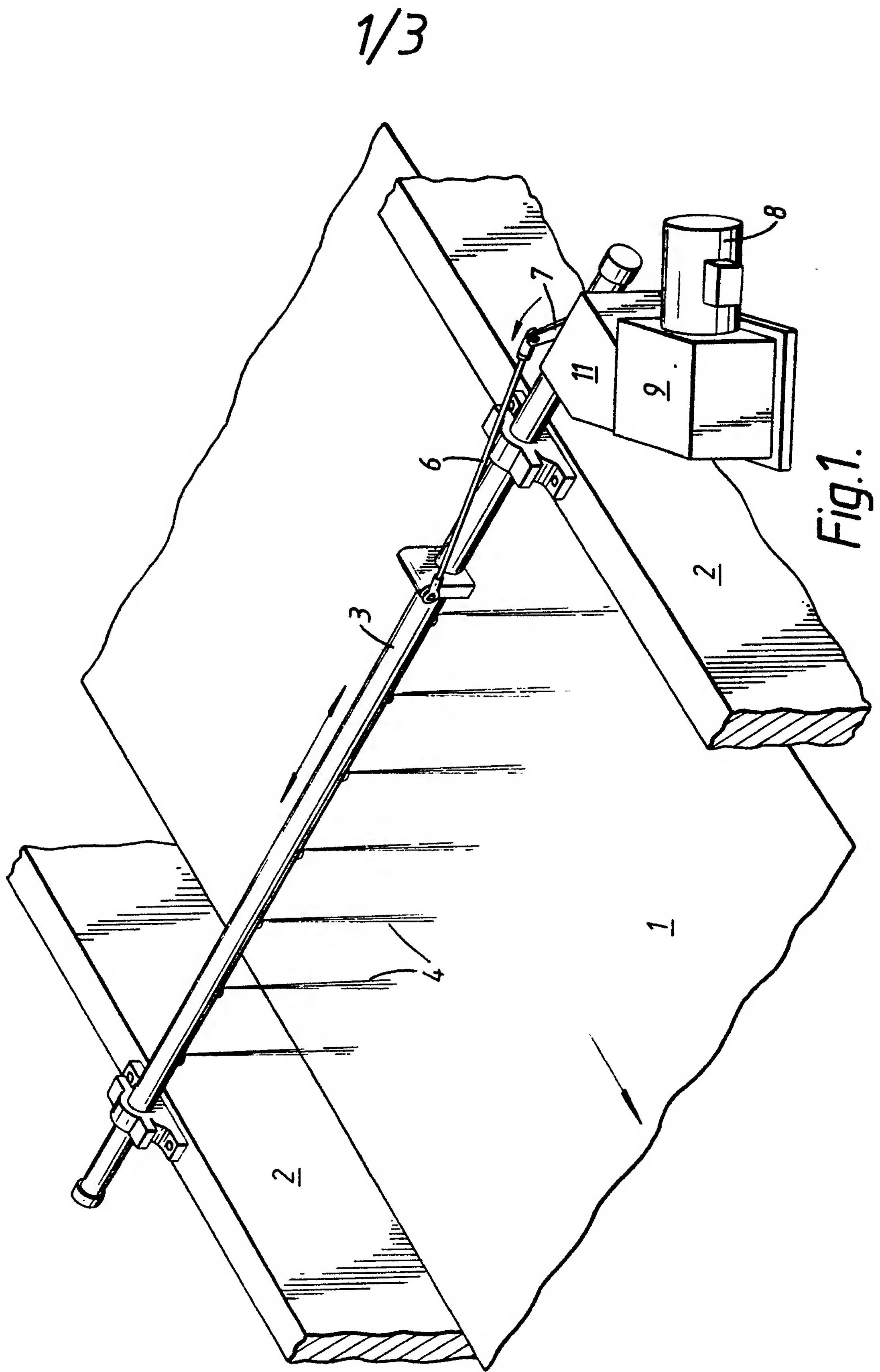


Fig.3.



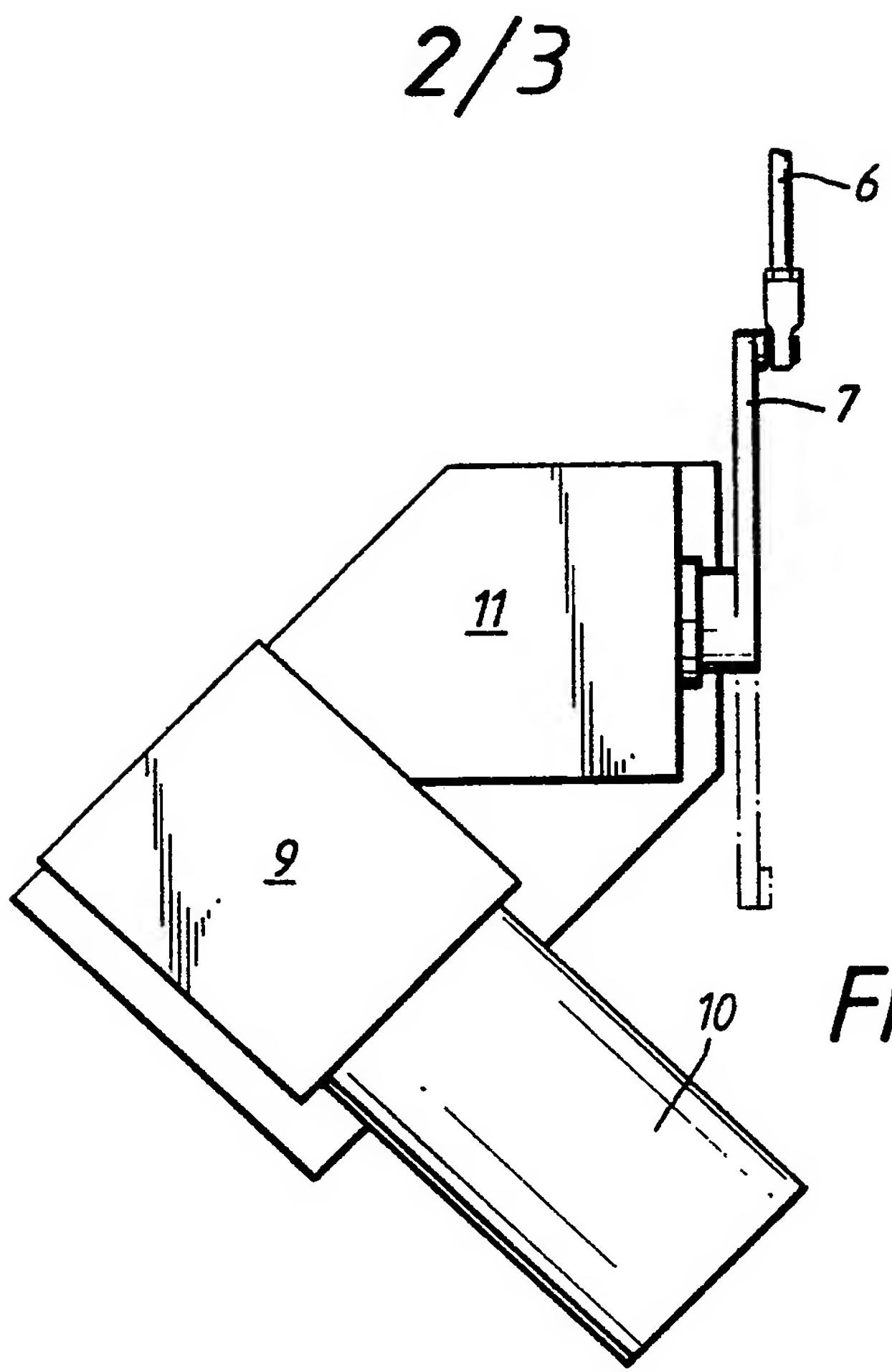


Fig. 2.

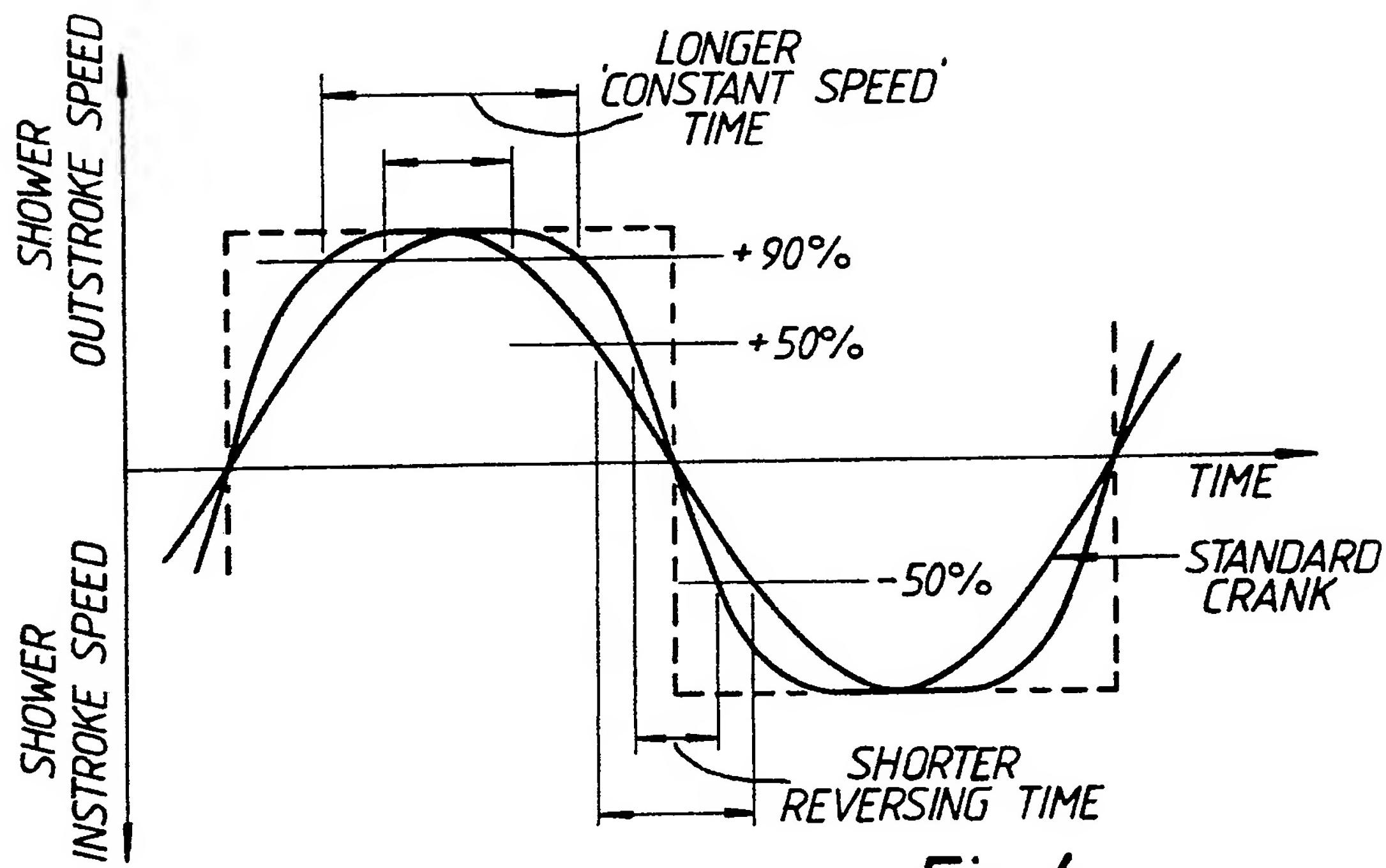


Fig. 4.

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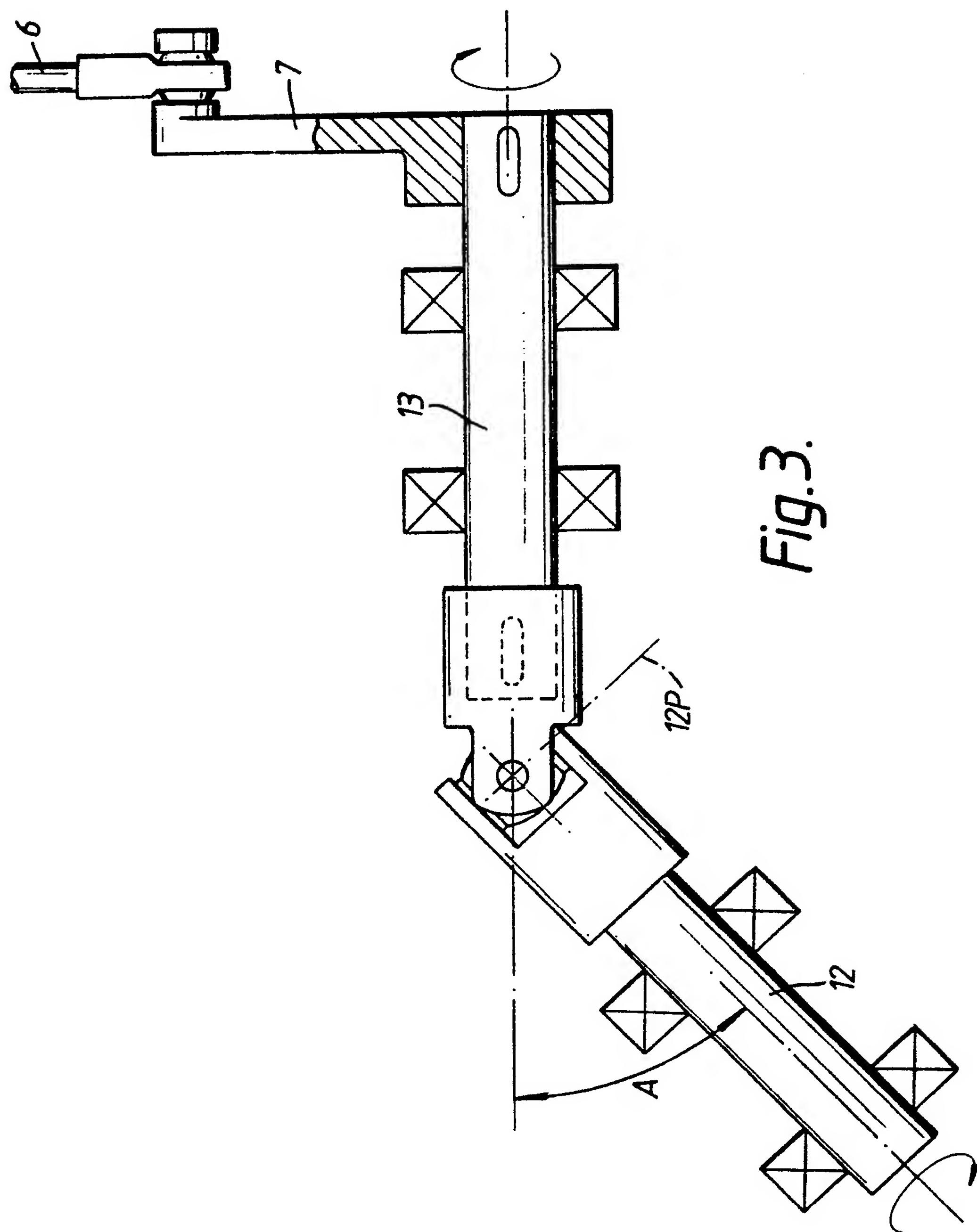


Fig. 3.

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Reciprocating shower drive mechanisms

This invention relates to drive mechanisms for reciprocating showers in paper mills.

Reciprocating showers are employed in various sections of paper mills, for example in the Fourdrinier section where their function is to cleanse the return section of the so-called "wire", or conveyor belt for pulp and fibres. Such a shower comprises an elongate pipe extending transversely of the conveyor belt and having outlet holes at intervals along its length through which water or an aqueous solution is directed onto the conveyor belt as high pressure jets. The pipe is slowly reciprocated to ensure that the belt is washed across its full width by the jets.

Conventional drive mechanisms comprise simple crank drives, which are very reliable in operation, in spite of the very difficult environmental conditions, but they have the well-known disadvantage that the linear motion of the shower is subject to cyclic acceleration and deceleration, the shower having its maximum velocity across the central region of the belt and minimum deceleration and acceleration at the edges of the belt, so that the lateral margins are wetted more than the central region.

Ideally, of course, the speed of traversing of the shower would be constant across the width of the belt

and reversal at the ends of the stroke would be instantaneous. Equipment which achieves this ideal is known, but is relatively very expensive.

The present invention provides a drive mechanism for a reciprocating shower, comprising a crank mechanism coupled to a rotary drive through the intermediary of at least one Hooke's joint universal coupling whose input and output shafts are set at an angle to each other and whose angular relationship to the crank mechanism is such that the crank is accelerated at the ends of its stroke and decelerated in the intermediate portion of its stroke during constant velocity rotation of the input shaft of the universal coupling.

Preferably, a single universal coupling is employed with its respective shafts set at an angle of about 45° to each other, but it would also be possible to provide a plurality of universal couplings in series with each other, each coupling having its shafts set at a smaller angle than 45°.

One form of drive mechanism in accordance with the invention is described below, by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is diagrammatic perspective view of a shower installation and a drive mechanism in accordance with the invention;

Figure 2 is a top plan view of the drive mechanism;

Figure 3 is a diagrammatic plan view of the main components of the drive mechanism;

Figure 4 is a comparative graph.

Figure 1 shows part of a continuous conveyor wire or felt 1 which passes between side walls 2 supporting an elongate pipe or shower 3 which is mounted for reciprocating movement transverse to the length of the conveyor. The shower is supplied continuously with water or aqueous solution under pressure, which is discharged as jets 4 through spaced outlets in the shower pipe.

The pipe is driven through a con-rod 6 from a simple rotary crank 7 which is continuously driven, typically at a speed of about 1 revolution per minute.

The drive mechanism is illustrated in more detail in Figures 2 and 3. The mechanism comprises a rotary motor 8, a gearbox 9 and an intermediate transmission section 11. The motor and gearbox are conventional in themselves and do not require detailed description, save to say they transmit a constant velocity drive, typically of about 1 r.p.m. to the transmission section 11.

As shown in Figure 3, the section 11 consists essentially of a Hooke's joint universal coupling having an input shaft 12 and an output shaft 13 set at an angle A of about 40° to 45° to each other, both being supported by rotary bearings. The output shaft 13 is keyed to the crank 7. In the position shown in Figure 3, the crank is at one extreme of its throw and the pivot axis 12P of the input shaft of the coupling is in a plane which also contains the axes of the input and output shafts. When the input shaft is rotated from this position at constant speed, the output shaft is given its maximum velocity, decelerating through the first 90° of rotation, then accelerating again through the next 90° .

Thus the cyclic variations of angular velocity of the output shaft and the crank are 180° out of phase with those of the shower pipe, which has the effect of reducing the period of reversal of the shower at each end of its stroke, and increasing the period for traversing the central region of its stroke.

Figure 4 illustrates this effect in graph form. The square wave-form in dotted lines shows the ideal situation, with instantaneous reversal at the ends of the stroke and constant velocity in between. The pure sine wave-form illustrates motion of the shower drive by a

standard crank driven at constant rotational speed, and the intermediate wave-form is that produced by the mechanism of the present invention.

It will be appreciated that many detailed variations and modifications will be possible within the scope of the invention. In particular, the angle A may be less than 45° but this is the optimum angle for a simple universal joint. However, a number of such joints may be employed in series, each having an angle A less than 45°, or a total angle between input and output shafts of more than 45°.

CLAIMS

1. A drive mechanism for a reciprocating shower, comprising a crank mechanism coupled to a rotary drive through the intermediary of at least one Hooke's joint universal coupling whose input and output shafts are set at an angle to each other and whose angular relationship to the crank mechanism is such that the crank is accelerated at the ends of its stroke and decelerated in the intermediate portion of its stroke during constant velocity rotation of the input shaft of the universal coupling.
2. A drive mechanism according to claim 1, comprising a single universal coupling.
3. A drive mechanism according to claim 2, wherein the input and output shafts of the universal coupling are set out at an angle of 40° to 45° to each other.
4. A drive mechanism according to claim 1 comprising a plurality of said universal couplings connected together in series between the rotary drive and the crank.
5. A drive mechanism for a reciprocating shower, substantially as herein described with reference to the accompanying drawings.